

LIFE

OF

GENERAL SAM HOUSTON.

SAM HOUSTON was born on the 2d day of March, in the year 1793, some eight miles northeast of Lexington, in Rockbridge county, Virginia.

His ancestors, on both sides, were of that North Scottish race that fled from oppression to North Ireland, whence, after the siege of Derry, they emigrated to the State of Pennsylvania. They and their descendants adhered to each other in their wanderings, till they reached the State of Virginia, where the father and mother of Houston were united in marriage. His father did his duty to the colonies in the Revolution. A man of iron frame, commanding bearing, and fearless courage, he died in 1807, bequeathing these qualities to his son,—the only legacy he had to bestow. His mother had a majestic mien and a countenance of great dignity, possessed a highly cultivated intellect, and was the friend of the poor. Her son was at her bed-side when she died, and wept tears of sorrow at the loss of one to whose training he owed the broad foundation of his manly character.

Like all sons of laboring parents, young Houston was compelled to devote far more of his time to farm-work than to school, yet he always kept up with his companions in the slow race of elementary learning. When he was thirteen years old his father died, and this event wholly changed the fortunes of the family. His mother found herself burdened with the support of six sons and three daughters, with an uninviting future before her, but with her usual determination of spirit, she disposed of the farm and other property which her husband had left, and removed to the West. After encountering many hardships in her long journey, she safely reached the bounds of civilization in the southwest, which were marked, in those days, by the Tennessee river. In advance of that stream were the Cherokee Indians, near whose territory Houston's mother settled; and her boys at once set themselves to work to open a farm.

Young Houston devoted all the time he could spare to the studies of a rude frontier school, during which he committed the whole of Pope's version of the Iliad to memory. By the advice of his elder brothers, he was induced to enter a country trader's store, but standing behind a counter was not a life to please a mind of his caste, and he suddenly disappeared. After a lapse of several weeks, news came to the family that he had fled to the Indians beyond the Tennessee river, among whom he was living greatly to his own satisfaction and comfort. His reason for taking this step was, that the wild liberty of the red man suited his nature far better than the restraints of the white settlements. He was now nearly six feet in height, and as straight as the straightest of the men of the forest. His mother and brothers believing that the romance of this mode of life would soon wear off, gave themselves no uneasiness about him, but he returned not to his home for several months, and when he did return, it was only to renew his wardrobe and betake himself again to his new abode. Nearly five years of experience in this mode of living initiated him into all the secrets of Indian life, and gave him a knowledge of savage character, that made him a complete master over the Indian mind, as his intercourse with the red man, in after years, fully proved.

Finding himself in debt, at the age of eighteen, for his own wearing apparel, and for purchases of gifts for his savage friends, he opened a school for the children of the whites on the frontier, at eight dollars a year, and soon got together enough money to discharge his obligations. He then renewed his own studies, under his old tutor, and undertook to dive into the secrets of geometry, but Euclid had little charms for a mind like his, and he threw it by to seek some more congenial pursuit.

It was now the year 1813, and while debating as to his future course or life, a recruiting party of the United States army appeared in Maryville, the chief

village of the settlement. He was just at that age when war and its deceptive colorings are sure to captivate the youthful ambition, and he enlisted without a moment's reflection. His mother gave him his musket, and bade him never disgrace it, telling him that the door of her cabin was always open to the brave, but never to the coward. Shortly after he entered the service he was made a sergeant, because of his skill as a drill-master, whence he was promoted to be an ensign. He was prominent in organizing and drilling the eastern battalion of the 39th regiment of infantry, which was soon to participate with him in the famous battle of the Horse Shoe.

Gen. Jackson's army, now amounting to some 2,000 men, was encamped at Fort Strother, and his spies occupied the forests far and near. The Creek Indians, against whom he was operating, had assembled a thousand of their warriors on a bend in the Tallapoosa river, called, from its shape, the Horse Shoe, where they had resolved to risk all upon a single battle. It is a peninsula of some hundred acres of land, opening towards the north, and a breastwork of three tiers of heavy pine trees, with two rows of well-arranged port holes, extended across the isthmus, from river bank to river bank. On the 27th of March, Gen. Jackson reached the Horse Shoe, and in a few hours completely invested the peninsula. Gen. Coffee had, by his directions, previously crossed the river, at a ford two miles below the bend, with a body of mounted rangers and nearly all the friendly Indians, and at 10 o'clock in the morning had so disposed his lines as to cut off all escape over the river from the south, east, and west sides of the bend. In the interval, Gen. Jackson advanced towards the north end of the peninsula with the main army, and began to play upon the enemy's breastworks with two small pieces of artillery. A brisk cannonade was kept up from half past 10 in the morning to one o'clock in the afternoon, with but little effect, owing to the light calibre of the artillery and the heavily-timbered barriers of the enemy, but just at this juncture a sharp firing of musketry and rifles was heard in the southern part of the peninsula, whence a dense column of smoke came rolling up. In the course of the morning the friendly Cherokees had discovered a line of canoes concealed under the bushes on the peninsula bank of the river, and a band of them instantly swam the stream and brought the prizes across. The Chief of the Cherokees, followed by his braves, and Captain Russell with his spies, immediately crossed the river in the canoes, set fire to a cluster of wigwams, and, under cover of the smoke, rushed upon the rear of the enemy, assembled near their north works. Gen. Jackson's troops, perceiving what had taken place in the southern part of the peninsula, were impatient to storm the breastworks, but he resisted their wishes, until he had sent an interpreter to the enemy, to ask the removal of their women and children to a place of safety beyond the river. This being done, the order to storm was received with enthusiasm, and the 39th regiment, in which our Houston served, under the command of Col. Williams, and the East Tennessee brigade under Gen. Dougherty, were, in a few moments, en-

gaged hand to hand with their adversaries. Major Montgomery was the first man to mount the works but he instantly fell back, pierced by a ball in the head.

At this moment, Ensign Houston, leading the extreme right of the 39th regiment, scaled the breastworks, followed by his brave companions, and leaping down among the pent-up band of savage warriors, with drawn sword, cut his way through them. In the midst of this gallant feat, a barbed arrow pierced his thigh, but he heeded it not, till the enemy began to recoil under his onset, when having essayed in vain to extract the arrow, he called upon one of his comrades to do it, but the man failing twice, Houston, with his drawn sword lifted on high, commanded him to try again threatening to cleave him to the earth if he failed a third time. This time the arrow followed the man's hand, and with it brought away a mass of flesh and a copious stream of blood, when our hero recrossed the barriers to have his wound dressed. While under the hands of the surgeon, Gen. Jackson recognised his young ensign, and commanded him not to return to the battle, but Houston, heedless of restraint, rushed again into the fight, determined to win a warrior's fame. The action had now become general. The Indians had been told by their prophet, a brother of Tecumseh, that they should win the battle, and that a cloud in the sky would be the signal of their victory. At the moment when Gen. Jackson had ordered the carnage to cease, and had sent an interpreter to command them to surrender, a cloud suddenly overspread the sky, and the savages, believing it to be the signal of their success, fired on the interpreter, and the battle was renewed. No quarter was given or taken, the work of slaughter was continued, till scarcely an Indian was left as a living monument of victory, but the battle was not yet over. A large body of the savages had retired to a part of the works, huddled over a ravine in the form of a house-roof, and from the narrow port holes of this barrier a deadly fire was kept up on the whites. The artillery could be brought to bear upon this point, and its occupants having rejected a proposition to spare their lives if they would surrender, Gen. Jackson determined to take the place by storm. A body of men was called for by the General to make the charge, but no response was given, no captain offered to lead the forlorn hope, when Houston, ordering a hesitating platoon to follow him, seized a man from one of his men, rushed down the steep bank towards the covered ravine, and stopping coolly to call his men within five yards of the port-holes of the enemy's works, bristling with rifles and arrows, received two rifle balls in his right shoulder, just as he was levelling his musket, and his arm fell shattered at his side. Utterly disabled, though still on his feet, he implored his men to charge, but they refused, and then retreating slowly beyond the range of musket shot, he fell to the earth bathed in his own blood. The covered ravine was afterwards set on fire, the sun of the 27th of March set upon the extinction of the tribe of Creek Indians.

Houston's heroism in this hard-fought engagement, excited the admiration of the whole

and he was taken from the field, as all thought, a dying and a dead man. One ball was extracted, but the other was left, because the surgeon thought he could not live till the next morning, and did not wish to torture him. It was a dark night for the young warrior, for comfortless as a camp is after a battle, it was more comfortless to him, because every body considered him as a dead man, and every body turned his attention to those wounded persons who, it was supposed, could live. But Houston survived—survived not only to enjoy the lasting regard and warmest sympathies of his commanding general, because of his military prowess displayed in this terrible battle, but to found, establish, and lead to glory a commonwealth of freemen, in a land which he wrested from the foot of Mexican despotism. The next day, he was sent on a litter to Fort Williams, 60 miles distant, where he lingered for a long time, between life and death, neglected and exposed, until he reached his mother's house, which was nearly two months after the battle. This long journey on a litter, while he was utterly helpless, suffering the most agonizing pains, sustained on the coarsest diet, obliged to encamp out with no shelter, and most of the way being through forests, was more calculated to kill him than to restore him, and when he reached the door of his mother's cabin, always open, as she told him, when he enlisted, to the brave, she failed to recognise him, so reduced was he in flesh.

After a tedious convalescence, he became strong enough to ride a horse, and at once started for the City of Washington, by slow journeys, which he reached shortly after the burning by the British of the Capitol and the other public buildings, and it was one of the keenest regrets of his life that his right arm should be disabled at a moment when the enemy had committed such a flagrant act of barbarism, but with his festering wound, he repaired to Lexington, in Virginia, where he tarried till the ensuing spring. Being recovered sufficiently to do soldier's duty, he recrossed the mountains, and at Knoxville, met the tidings of the battle of New Orleans. After the peace, and when the army was reduced, he was retained in the service as a lieutenant in the 1st Regiment of Infantry, which was stationed at New Orleans. In the fall of that year, he embarked in a skiff, on the Cumberland, for his post, in company with the late Edward D. White, afterwards governor of Louisiana, and representative from that State in Congress for many years. He had with him, in his sail bark, with which he threaded the vast solitude of the father of waters, a choice but small library, and among its volumes were the Bible, a gift from his mother, Pope's Iliad, his companion among the Indians, Shakespeare, Akenside, and Pilgrim's Progress. His skiff, turning a bend in the Mississippi, just above Natchez, brought to his astonished view the first steamboat that ever assended the great river, and parting with his canoe at Natchez, he made the rest of his journey on the "fire ship" to New Orleans, where he reported for duty. Here his wounds were once more reopened, for the purpose of extracting a shattered bone from his shoulder, but this effort was a vain one, and the operation well-nigh proved fatal. After a winter of great suffering, he repaired by sea to

New York, where he sojourned some weeks and improved in his general health.

Having returned to Tennessee, he reported to the Adjutant General of the southern division of the army, at Nashville, where he was stationed and detailed on duty in the adjutant's office on the 1st of July, 1817. In the following November, feeble as he was in health, he was despatched as an agent to execute a treaty, just ratified with the Cherokees, for Gen. Jackson could find no one to discharge this duty, in whom he reposed so high a confidence as in Houston. Unfit as he was for public service, the lieutenant executed his mission with signal ability, and the same winter conducted a delegation of Indians to Washington. On his arrival at the seat of Government, he found that efforts had been made, by the parties interested, to undermine him with the administration, because he had, in discharge of his official duties, hindered the smuggling of African negroes from Florida, then a province of Spain, into the Western States. He triumphantly vindicated himself, in the eyes of the then President and his administration, from the charge of having violated the laws, and demonstrated to their satisfaction, that he had done his duty as an officer of the army, in compelling an observance of the laws which forbade the introduction of African slaves into the country, and that too, while suffering no respite from his painful wounds. It was Gen. Jackson's opinion, at the time, that Houston had not only done his duty in the premises, but ought to have received at the hands of the Government the highest token of its appreciation of his sacrifices in the public service. But he regarded himself as slighted, resigned his commission in the army, returned with the Indian Delegation to Tennessee, gave up his agency, and went to Nashville to study law.

Houston was now 25 years of age. In abandoning military life, he had to bear with him a heavy load of debt, part of which was discharged by the sale of the last piece of real property he had, but the remainder was only satisfied after he had embarked in the practice of the law. In June, 1818, he entered the office of Mr. James Trimble, and after a few months' severe study, was admitted to the bar, and immediately commenced the practice of his new profession, with a small library, at Lebanon. Shortly after this event, he was appointed Adjutant General of Tennessee, with the rank of Colonel, and rose so rapidly at the bar, that in October of 1819 he was elected district attorney of the Davidson district, which rendered it necessary for him to remove to Nashville. Brought into collision with the most eminent legal talent of the State, his powers of generalization and his sound judgment, in his new calling, gave him an advantage over his seniors, that no opposition could dislodge him from, but after a twelve months' profitless discharge of the unceasing duties of his new office, he abandoned it, to rise to the highest distinctions of the profession, in its regular practice.

In 1821 he was elected Major General of Tennessee. In 1823 he offered himself as a candidate for Congress, and was elected without opposition. In 1825 he was returned a second time to Congress almost by acclamation, so well satisfied were his con-

stituents with his course in the House of Representatives. His popularity rose to such a height that in 1827 he was elected Governor of Tennessee by a majority of more than 12,000 votes, and his accession to office found him without an opponent in the Legislature. In the midst of his gubernatorial term, January, 1829, he contracted a marriage which, in less than three months thereafter, ended in a separation of the parties. It is not known, however, to this day, what were the real causes of this unfortunate result, for Houston's lips have never been opened upon the subject to a single human being. It is enough to know that he changed all his plans and purposes in life, for he instantly resigned his office of Governor, gave up all the bright future before him, and exiled himself from all the habitations of men. He went to the wigwam of his adopted father, the chief of the Cherokees, in Arkansas, and sat down in the corner of the lodge that had been assigned him by the savages some dozen years before.

Tearing himself away from his sorrowing friends at Nashville, the voluntary exile, after many days of travel and toil, reached in safety the mouth of the Illinois, near the falls of the Arkansas, 400 miles to the northwest of Little Rock, where the Cherokees were settled. It was night when Oolooteka, the rich old Chief, full six feet in height, and unbent by age, bringing with him all his family, hurried to the river bank to meet his adopted son Colonneh, (the Raven,) who, he had been previously informed, was on board the steamboat, then ascending the stream. The reception was all that the hospitality and simplicity of the Indian character could give to such a scene—the old Chief delicately alluding to the dark cloud that had fallen across the path of the white warrior, but assuring him, with the zeal of a prophet, that the Great Spirit had conducted the exile to the Cherokees, who were in great trouble, to give them counsel and to tell their sorrows to their great father, General Jackson. Three years' life among these sons of the forest afforded him ample opportunity to vindicate the oppressed red men from their wrongs and sufferings, and he proved himself to be what they had always regarded him and still regard him, their friend. Houston has often declared that he never was betrayed or deceived by one of the children of the forest, during his intercourse of years with them, and this fidelity to him has been more than repaid, for there is not a single instance in his whole life in which he ever betrayed or deceived them, and this is one of the secrets of his power over them.

During his residence among the Cherokees, he saw with his own eyes and heard with his own ears the wrongs and sufferings inflicted upon and endured by these helpless Indians, and he resolved to report to President Jackson, who was still his tried friend, the conduct of the Indian agents and sub-agents, by which their victims were defrauded out of nearly every dollar of the money which was paid by treaty to this tribe. His opinion has always been, that if one-third of the money which has been paid by the United States to the Indians, had been usefully and honestly applied, they would now be in the enjoyment of most of the arts of civiliza-

tion, but the fraud and injustice of the white agents sent among them, and the introduction of ardent spirits by their very protectors, are the measure of the desolation and gradual extinction of these men of the forest. While he resided among the Cherokees, he was unceasing in his efforts to prevent the bringing in of spirituous liquors amongst them, setting himself the traders an example of abstinence from trafficking in these destructive drinks. The intolerable and gross acts of outrage upon the rights and feelings of the Indians, by the agents of the United States, rose to such a pitch that, in execution of his long cherished design, he repaired to Washington in the year 1832, and laid before the President the clearest and most overwhelming evidence of the conduct of these Government agents, and the result was, the dismissal of a large number of principals and accessories from the public service. Previous to his leaving the tents of the Cherokees for Washington, the parties, who knew of his purpose of exposing them, heaped upon his head the basest libels, through the press, which they controlled, and when the President's prompt and just removal of these men took place, the war upon him was resumed with redoubled violence, both in and out of Congress, and by the opposition press, both east and west of the mountains.

At that period the opposition to General Jackson had reached its zenith, and failing to touch even the hem of the old Hero's garment, it turned upon Houston, who was the cherished friend of the President. Through the purposed neglect of the contractors for furnishing rations to the Creeks and the Cherokees, only a scanty supply of food had been issued to them at the most unhealthy point in the new country of these tribes, and several of them had actually died of starvation. Houston proved, beyond a doubt, that such a result was due to the inhuman acts of these contractors, in the premises and they and their friends, in and out of Congress attacked and pursued him with furious malignity. A member of the House of Representatives from the State of Ohio, who had been elected as a friend of the President, was put forward to assail Houston and he accordingly charged him with having endeavored to obtain a fraudulent contract for the supply of Indians, and boldly intimated that the Secretary of War, and even Gen. Jackson, were implicated in the attempted fraud. When Houston said that the integrity and fame of the President had been questioned, because of hatred to him, (Houston,) his patience of evil for a moment forsook him, and he threatened, in the heat of passion, to punish the beller. Knowing of Houston's threat, he kept out of his way for some days, till, having learned that his opponent was unarmed, he approached him on a moonlight night, on the avenue, in a hostile attitude. Houston recognising him, demanded if he were not Stansbury, of Ohio, and no sooner was the avowal of his identity uttered, than he was felled to the earth by Houston, who had nothing with him but a hickory cane, which was shivered over the libeller's head, after he had snapped a pistol at H.'s breast. The chastised politician caused for processes to be commenced against Houston, in the hope of crushing him forever. He was first arre

and tried by the House of Representatives, for violating the rights of one of its members. The trial lasted thirty days, and ended in a vote of instructions to the Speaker to reprimand him, which was done in so delicate a manner that history regards the issue as a signal approval of what Houston had done. The conduct of Houston on that trial gained over to his side many of his opponents, and his defense of himself and President Jackson on that occasion is justly considered as one of the most powerful and convincing arguments that ever signalized the proceedings of a high court of judicature. It was shown on the trial that he had not done any thing more than to protect himself, while unarmed, against the attempt of a member of the House to take his life, and the country saw and felt that such was the case, and what is more, that Houston was persecuted because of his attachment to Gen. Jackson, whose fair fame he would not suffer to be attacked, by even a member of Congress, with impunity. Deeply seated as was the affection of the American people for Houston previous to this occurrence, it took still deeper root when they saw him standing by the old chief at the risk of life itself, in the discharge of his solemn duties. The next process against him was his arraignment before a Committee of the House, to investigate the charge of fraud, brought against him by Stansbury, at the head of which committee was the libeller himself, but this process was consented to by the House at the instance of the accused. A tedious and thorough investigation resulted in a complete exculpation of the accused from the base charge. The next step his foes took was to submit a resolution, excluding him from the privilege of the floor of the House, but in this they failed also. The last act in the drama was, for the punished member to appear before the Grand Jury of the District of Columbia, and on his complaint Houston was indicted and held to bail in criminal process for a large sum. He waited his trial, and was fined \$500 and costs, but the sentence of the court was never enforced, and one of the last acts of President Jackson was to remit the fine. During this whole contest, a contest brought upon himself by his love of truth and justice, and his friendship for the Indian, Houston invited the most searching scrutiny into his actions and life, and exposed himself as freely to the weapons of his enemies as he had done at the battle of the Horse Shoe, and when they were obliged to retire with mortification and contempt from their ill-judged warfare against an honest man, he deliberately abandoned civilized life again, and went into his favorite exile among the Indians.

Received on his return to the West with every demonstration of regard, he could not be prevailed upon to remain in Tennessee, and though invited by Gen. Jackson to the most distinguished posts of honor and emolument, he rejected them all, and found repose by the hearth-stone of a savage monarch, after many months' persecutions by the Christian. It was his intention now to devote himself to a herdsman's life, in the tranquillity of the prairies, but he was not permitted to carry into execution this design. Leaving his wigwam on the 1st of December, 1832, with a few companions, he

made through the wilderness for Fort Towson, and reporting himself to the authorities at Nacogdoches, San Felipe de Austin, and San Antonio de Bexar, he held an interview with a delegation of Camanche Indians, then on a visit to the latter place. On his return, he was solicited by the people of Nacogdoches to establish himself amongst them permanently, and to allow his name to be used in the canvass for a convention, which was to meet, in the following April, to consider the expediency of applying for the admission of Texas as a State into the Mexican Union. He consented, for he saw that a great destiny awaited the people who should inhabit that region, that this was a field wherein all the bold elements of his character could find full play, and that he might be enabled to so direct them in his new sphere as to benefit his fellow men. Pending the canvass, he went to Natchitoches in Louisiana, and reported to President Jackson the result of his interview with the Camanche Indians. This visit of Houston to San Antonio de Bexar was dictated by President Jackson, to ascertain the disposition of the Camanches to enter into treaties with the United States, and, with that object in view, to endeavor to prevail on a delegation of that warlike tribe of red men to visit Washington. The movement was only a part of the policy of the then President, looking to a final removal of all the Indians east of the Mississippi to their present hunting grounds, and it was wisely considered that treaties with the Camanches would promote the voluntary emigration of the tribes to their new homes. The mission of Houston was confidential, and nothing, of course, is known of the details, but the results were most propitious, showing the wisdom of the old hero in the selection of his agent.

During his absence, Houston was unanimously elected a member of the proposed Texas convention, and he accordingly took up his residence among his new constituents, by whom he was warmly received. The convention, composed of some fifty members, met in a rude log cabin at San Felipe de Austin, the seat of Government of Austin's colony, on the 1st of April, 1833. After thirteen days' deliberation, this able body of constitution makers, who had to pay their own expenses, unanimously adopted one of the very best State constitutions extant, and appointed Stephen H. Austin, William H. Wharton, the president of the convention, and James B. Miller, to carry it to Mexico, and to seek for and obtain the admission of Texas into the confederacy. In 1832, Bustamente had subverted the constitution of 1824, and in this effort he was joined by the military, but Santa Ana declared himself to be a friend of the constitution, and the Anglo-Saxon colonists sided with him in the civil revolution, which put down his rival and the soldiery. Santa Ana was now in power, and the convention of San Felipe regarded the mission of their committee as certain to be successful, but they were destined to be disappointed. Austin went alone to the city of Mexico, was received with a cold formality, and given to understand that his mission was not pleasing to Santa Ana, who was resolved, from the first, on converting the Government into

a military despotism. The greatest care was taken by the convention to form a constitution as consonant as possible to the prejudices and institutions of the Central Government, which had already degenerated into a despotism, and to give effect to this policy all banks and banking corporations were prohibited for ninety-nine years by the proposed State, but the concession had no effect in recommending the instrument to Santa Ana. In passing, it may be observed that Houston's influence in the convention was so predominant that he may be said to be the father of the constitution it made, and to have given direction to the events that followed.

Austin had been seized and thrown into a dungeon in the city of Mexico, and when the news of the fate of this enlightened patriot reached his colony, it roused the colonists to a phrenzy of indignation, and it was with the utmost difficulty that Houston could restrain them from the display of their feelings in acts that would have plunged them into a conflict with the home Government before they were prepared for it. After several months of suffering, Austin was released by Santa Ana, and returned home to find the public mind of the colony inflamed to a dangerous degree, and to discover that Santa Ana was aiming at nothing less than the possession of absolute power. The commerce of Texas was now most oppressively restricted, the worst men were appointed to collect the customs, taxation was increased to a ruinous height, justice was refused to the people except at the price of enormous extortions, and the Mexican laws and edicts were made the instruments of wholesale tyranny in the hands of corrupt officials. This was the beginning of the end. An edict issued by Santa Ana, commanding the people to surrender their arms, roused the colonists to resistance. There was a four pounder at Gonzales, the capital of Dewitt's colony, and a Mexican colonel, at the head of several hundred dragoons, came from Bexar to carry it off, but the colonists banded together, and not only rescued the small piece, but determined to pursue the enemy, who had fired the first gun, and drove him from the country. Austin was elected general of the forces, the alarm spread to the Sabine, committees of vigilance and safety were appointed, the militia was organized, Houston was chosen general of the forces east of the Trinity, and a consultative body convened at San Felipe de Austin to devise means of safety. In October, 1835, Austin marched upon Bexar and invested it with eight hundred men. The consultative committee was organized at San Felipe de Austin, when it received an invitation to repair to Bexar. In the mean time, Goliad had been captured by the citizens of Matagorda and Victoria. On the arrival of Houston and the greater part of the convention at Austin's camp before Bexar, Austin offered to surrender the command to Houston, but the latter positively declined the magnanimous offer. A counsel of war was immediately held, and it was resolved to refer to the army the question of forming a provisional government, when it was unanimously voted that the members of the consultative committee should forthwith return to San Felipe, form a provisional government, devise ways and means to support the army then

in the field, and adopt such measures as would give the nation credit abroad. Accordingly the consultation assembled at San Felipe, in a narrow frame cabin, without ceiling or plastered walls, and made a provisional declaration of independence, exhorting all Mexicans to stand by the Mexican constitution of 1824, and pledging their lives, property, and sacred honor in support of its principles, established an organic law for the provisional government of the Territory, and organized a temporary administration of it. Houston was on the committee to prepare a declaration, and though the majority were in favor of an absolute declaration of independence, he considered the movement premature, and in an able speech carried his policy of a provisional declaration. The provisional government was to continue in office till superseded by regular officers elected by the people, and measures were taken for raising a regular army and thoroughly organizing the militia.

An event now took place which decided the fate of Texas, and that was, the election of Houston, by 49 out of 50 votes in the consultation, to be commander-in-chief of the armies of Texas. He accepted the appointment, selected his staff, and drew up the necessary bills for organizing the army, appointment of officers, &c. Texas had not a dollar in her treasury, at this juncture, but Austin, Wharton, and Archer were already on their way to the United States, to borrow money, if possible, to enable the revolutionists to make good their cause. Houston's hopes of money were not sanguine. He relied on the resources, rather, of the handful of his fellow citizens, who were embarked in the same cause with himself, and on the generous patriots of the country whence he had exiled himself. He issued a proclamation, inviting 5000 men to join the cause of Texas. Austin was succeeded by Gen. Burleson, under whose command the army kept the field.

About this time, Fannin and Bowie, with 100 men, encountered 500 Mexicans at the Conception Mission, and after a brilliant conflict forced the latter to retire with great loss, and marched on to Bexar. After this event, Col. Milam offered to take the town of Bexar by storm, if a forlorn hope would join him, and immediately 200 brave men rallied under his banner, entered the town at night, made their way from house to house, with crowbars, through the walls, and after several days' fighting, in one of which the daring Milam fell, got entire possession of the place, and the Alamo, the enemy's citadel, defended by 1100 Mexicans, capitulated. The surrender of Bexar was followed by a disbanding of the colonial army, save the gallant spirits who had reduced the Alamo and two companies of volunteers from the United States. A man by the name of Grant, who was aid to General Austin, claimed the command of the remnant of the troops, after General Burleson had retired, and forthwith he projected the invasion of Matamoras, and he was supported in the project by the military committee of the General Council that was hostile to Houston. Col. Fannin united with the Council in its schemes against his commander, notwithstanding he was indebted to Houston for his promotion to the post he then held.

he Council ordered Houston to establish his headquarters at Washington, 50 miles distant from their meeting, and in his absence hurried on their intrigues as rapidly as possible, while, unsuspecting of their designs, he assigned the officers to their several recruiting stations, and directed regular reports to be made to him. Fannin had been ordered to Brazoria, where he utterly disregarded the despatches of the General-in-Chief, who, about this time, was charged with a design, by his enemies, of establishing a military government in Texas, at the head of 5,000 soldiers.

On the 1st of January, 1836, Governor Smith, who had discovered the intrigues against the general-in-chief, ordered him to repair to San Felipe. More troops from the United States had arrived at the mouth of the Brazos, but Fannin, who was at Brazoria, refused to report their arrival at headquarters, though directed to do so, and abandoning his duty in the regular army, took command as colonel of the new regiment formed out of the volunteers just arrived, to which post he had been elected by the Council. The new regiment was ordered by the Council to rendezvous at Refugio, where it was to meet Grant with his command, and thence the expedition to Matamoras was to set out. Houston reported to the Governor, and was ordered to Refugio. He reached Goliad about the middle of January, and finding Grant and his force on the eve of their departure for Refugio, made known to the troops his orders, but Grant refused obedience to them. Ignorant of the extent to which the Council had gone, in thwarting his policy of preparing for the enemy, when he should appear in force, Houston could not account for the extraordinary conduct of Grant, but knowing it was impossible to hold Bexar, he detached Cols. Bowie and Bonham, with an escort, to that town, with orders to the commanding officer to blow up the Alamo and fall back to Gonzales, on the Guadalupe, which he intended to make the line of defence. He accompanied the troops to Refugio, but Fannin was not there, whereupon he took occasion to dissuade the officers and their men from persisting in their attempt on Matamoras, showing them the folly of the undertaking, in a military point of view, and the certain disaster that awaited it, but fearing the effect of sedition in the army, which he saw it was easy to excite, in consequence of the reluctance of the troops to bow to the command of any other general than himself, he set out from Refugio in the night, with his staff, and returned to San Felipe, to report to the Governor his failure to induce Grant and other officers to return to their duty. On the road, he got intelligence that the Council had deposed the Governor and superseded his own authority, and that Fannin had repudiated, in published letters, Houston's authority, and thrown himself on the Council. His eyes were now opened to the true situation of the country, and he hastened to San Felipe, made an official report to the deposed Governor, proceeded at once to the Texas Cherokees, formed a treaty with that tribe, in obedience to the instructions of the convention, and returned to Washington in time to be present at the general convention of the 1st of March, 1836, to which he had been chosen a delegate.

On the day after its organization, the 2d of March, 1836, the Declaration of Texan Independence was adopted and signed by the whole convention, and herein was felt and acknowledged the master-spirit of Houston, who, from that hour, was the saviour of his country. Events had contributed to precipitate public opinion in favor of the Declaration of Independence, but no influence operated so powerfully towards the accomplishment of that glorious result as the indomitable will and all-controlling energy of Houston. In the United States and in Europe it was styled by the enemies of democracy, an act of high-handed robbery, perpetrated by a band of bold outlaws, but to every man who believes that all political power is and ought to be derived from the people, by express and direct grant, and that all people, whenever they choose to exercise it, have an inalienable right to overturn every form of government which is not based upon this democratic principle, the Declaration of Texan Independence was a just exhibition of the rightful power of the people, destined to be crowned with success. Some days before the consummation of this act, letters had been received from Col. Travis, in command of the Alamo of Bexar, stating that he was besieged by a numerous force, and calling for assistance. Houston, foreseeing this result, had given orders to the commanding officer to blow up the citadel and retire, but he refused obedience, because the Council had directed him to hold out to the last, promising to reinforce him, which was done with 30 men, making his force 185 effective troops, without a month's provision, and cut off from the settlements by a territory seventy miles in width and traversed by the enemy's cavalry. The general convention took the place of the provisional government, and Houston resigned his major generalship, but there was no other man in Texas to whom the country could look in its then need, and he was re-elected General-in-Chief, by 55 out of 56 votes. He accepted the command. On Sunday, the 6th of March, a letter was received from Col. Travis to the president of the convention, the last he ever wrote, announcing that all was lost, whereupon the convention assembled in a tumult, and a motion was made that the convention should adjourn, arm, and march to the relief of the Alamo. Houston, seeing that the hour had come when the action of the convention would decide the fate of Texas, determined what the Council should do, and what he himself should do also. He opposed the motion in one of those effective speeches he is always remarkable for, when any great act is to be done, denounced it as treason to the people, advised the Convention to remain calmly at their posts and do their duty to the country, by organizing a government, without which they could not hope for the sympathy or respect of mankind. He spoke for an hour, and when he had finished, walked out of the Convention, and in a few minutes thereafter, with three or four companions, he was on his way to the Alamo.

The party rode hard that day, and gained the prairie, where they rested for the night, but at break of the following day Houston was seen at a distance, by himself, listening intensely, as if expecting to hear a signal, for Travis had written that as long as the Alamo could hold out signal guns would

be fired at sunrise. For many successive days these guns could be heard across the prairie, with a low, rumbling sound, for nearly two hundred miles, but that morning, Houston, whose sense of sound was as acute as that of the Indian, listened in vain—not the faintest murmur floated across the air. He knew the Alamo had fallen, and the event confirmed his convictions, for the Alamo had fired its last gun on the morning he left Washington, and at the very moment he was addressing the Convention the victims were meeting their dreadful fate. He returned to his companions and wrote a letter to the Convention, advising them to adopt a resolution declaring Texas to be a part of Louisiana, under the treaty of 1803, but he was not present to enforce this wise suggestion, and it was not heeded. He reached Gonzales on the 10th of March, where he found 374 men, unorganized, without supplies, and badly armed and clad. Previous to leaving Washington, he had sent an express to Fannin, ordering him to join him on the Cibolo, intending to march to the relief of the Alamo, but after the fall of that fortress was positively known, the general, by another express, apprised him of that fact, ordered him to evacuate Goliad, blow up the fortress, and fall back without delay on Victoria and the Guadalupe, so as to unite all the forces in the field, amounting to 900 effective men, well armed.

The news of the cold blooded massacre of the Alamo, and the burning of the dead upon a vast funeral pile, flew like lightning through the colonies, and stirred up a feeling that was never to sleep again. Fannin's last order reached him eight days before he attempted a retreat, and he replied to the general-in-chief that he had held a council of war, that he should not retreat, but would defend his post to the last, calling it Fort Defiance, and that he was prepared to answer for his disobedience of orders. On the 12th of March Mrs. Dickinson arrived with her child at Gen. Houston's camp, with two negro guides, who brought a proclamation of pardon to the insurgent colonists, if they would lay down their arms, but the proclamation was treated with contempt. Mrs. Dickinson was the wife of one of the slaughtered of the Alamo, and her account of that terrible scene, of which she was an eye-witness, had struck horror into the camp, before she was conducted to the General, who, at the moment of her arrival, was walking alone, a short distance from his tent. When she told the troops that 5,000 men were advancing by forced marches, that their artillery would soon be heard at Gonzales, consternation spread on all sides,—many setting fire to their tents, some flying, and others wild with lamentations. Houston coming up, ordered the fires to be extinguished, and learning the cause of all this commotion, called to his comrades, who gathered round him, and encouraging them to be of good cheer, announced to them that he should fall back to a more secure position, and accordingly, that same night, he ordered his camp to be struck, and the little band took up their time of march. Foreseeing the disasters that followed, the General-in-Chief, when he first reached Gonzales, ordered all the women and children to be sent to the inner settlements, being resolved that he would never leave the helpless to the mercies of

Mexicans. On arriving at Lavaca, he remarked to one of his aids, as he pointed to the little band that seemed but a handfull on the praries, that they both saw before them the last hope of Texas, that neither Fannin nor his men would ever be seen again, that with the 500 men in sight, Texan Independence must be asserted or lost. That night he was seen feeding a fire with splinters to make a light by which one of his aids reduced to writing his orders to the settlements on the Brazos, to send him cannon, mules, horses, and ammunition. On reaching Navidad the next day, he was informed that a blind woman with seven children had been passed without notice having been given her of the approach of the enemy, whereupon he ordered an aid de-camp and 50 men to go after them and bring them into camp, refusing to stir a foot forward till these helpless ones were safely brought in.

One of the general's despatches to the Military Committee, dated Navidad, sets down the force a 374 men, with two days' provision, many without arms and ammunition, no artillery, and all of them ignorant of the first principles of the drill. In the same despatch, he predicts with fearful certainty the tragedy of Goliad, and demonstrates that the affairs of the Alamo and Goliad were the obvious fruits of disobedience of orders. On the 17th of March, he reached the Colorado, and having crossed that river, wrote to the Military Committee that, only 300 men remained with him, he would conquer the enemy. In a few days, Gen. Sezma, at the head of a column of the Mexicans, reached the Colorado, and while attempting to cross, was only prevented from falling, with his whole force, into an ambuscade, by the imprudence of a portion of the party lying in wait. On the night of that day, a fugitive came into the Texan camp and announced the massacre of Fannin and all his men. This intelligence filled the army with consternation and despair, and had it not been that the General-in-Chief denounced the fugitive as a Mexican spy, though fully believing in the truth of the news, it is now regarded as certain that his whole army would have deserted. He caused the fugitive to be arrested, announcing his intention to have him shot the next morning, and addressing his little army, he offered them many reasons why there should be no truth in the story. A few days after this event, the army encamped on the Brazos, where it remained till the 11th of April, with a small steamboat at command. The detachment left in charge of San Fan Felipe, on the arrival of the enemy, retired to the east bank of the river and threw up a breastwork of timber, upon which the Mexicans opened their artillery, and thus gave the General the first notice of the approach of the enemy's main body. The entire force of the Texan army, at that moment, did not exceed 52 men, but a reinforcement of 500 from the Red Land was daily expected, and they would have reached the camp in due time, had not the enemies of Houston in order to prevent their going forward, raised the cry of Indian hostilities, and thus induced them to pause in their march.

The enemy were marching upon the Texan General in three columns,—the centre led by Santa Anna from Bexar, by way of Gonzales, San Felipe and

Washington, towards Nacogdoches, the southern column under Urrea, by way of Victoria, Brazoria, and Harrisburg, the northern column, under Gaona, by way of Bastrop, Tenoxtitlan, and the Camanche crossing on the Trinity, both the latter towards the same point. Houston saw, at once, that these movements of the enemy had to be broken up in less than thirty days, or Texas would be swept with the desom of desolation, and all would be lost. How this seemingly impossible work was to be achieved, no man but Houston knew, and all eyes were turned to him as the only and last hope of Texas, under providence. While it was commonly believed that his army numbered 2,500 men strong, a belief the error of which he took no pains to correct, lest it might thereby discourage reinforcements, his real situation was only known to the committee of safety at Nacogdoches. The rivers were, every where, at high flood, at that time, and he had reason to hope that this impediment would retard the progress of the enemy, but by means of a boat, which had been cautiously carried to the western bank, Santa Ana was enabled to pass the Brazos at Fort Bend on the 17th of April. The northern column became becalmed in its march, and descended the Colorado, and the southern division, hindered by the high water, never passed the Brazos at all.

After Houston had left the Convention so abruptly on the 6th of March, that body created a government *ad interim*, consisting of a President and heads of Departments, and then, instead of following Houston's advice, to remain at their posts, adjourned on the 17th of March, in consternation and alarm, to Harrisburg, seventy miles southeast of Washington. This dispersion of the convention, prevented more than anything else the assembling of reinforcements for the army, and Houston has always regarded it as fraught with greater evils to Texas than even the march of the barbarous enemy. It is out of evil frequently cometh good, for Santa Anna abandoned his general plan of invasion, so far to diverge from his route to Nacogdoches, with a view to capture the new government, which, he had informed, was at Harrisburg, towards which point Houston, now supplied for the first time with six pounders, hastened with his whole army. After a fatiguing march, he arrived at Harrisburg, just as it had been reduced to ashes by Santa Anna, captured two couriers from the city of Mexico, an important intelligence for the invading army. The General-in-Chief at once decided upon giving battle, and issuing the necessary orders for the army to supply itself with three days' cooked rations, cross the Buffalo bayou with great difficulty in a leaky boat, and on the 19th of April formally announced his determination to fight Santa Anna wherever he could find him. "We are but 700 strong," said he in his despatch to the Secretary of War, "but we will conquer." The army was drawn up, and Generals Houston and Rusk (the latter Secretary of War) addressed their comrades in few but stirring words, giving the watchword, "Remember the Alamo."

Warned that Santa Anna was marching in order to cross the San Jacinto, Houston anticipated him and posted himself in a copse of trees on a bend of

the Bayou Buffalo, near where it joined the San Jacinto, and prepared to give him a hot reception. The Mexican was fully apprised of the position of the Texan, and boldly moved upon the latter, opening the battle with a brass twelve pounder, but a well directed fire from Houston's two six pounders turned the enemy's infantry and forced it to take shelter in a grove of timber. This movement of the Mexican being checked, he fell back near the Bay of San Jacinto, about fifteen hundred yards from the Texan lines, and began a fortification. "Had I pursued the enemy this morning," said Houston to one of his confidential officers on the evening of the day on which he repulsed the Mexican column, "we should have conquered, but it would have been with a heavy loss, but to-morrow I will conquer, slaughter, and put to flight yon whole army, and it shall not cost the lives of a dozen of my brave comrades." Col. Sherman, during the day, became impatient of delay, and in disobedience of his superior's orders, endeavored to bring on a general engagement, and it was only prevented through the activity of the General-in-Chief, and his prompt countervailing commands and actions. The Texan army retired to their camp, and refreshed themselves for the first time in forty-eight hours. During the whole of the day, Houston remained in the saddle, exposed to the enemy's artillery, and more than once narrowly escaped with his life. After doubling the vigilance of the encampment to prevent surprise, he laid himself under an oak to rest, with his saddle for a pillow, and without covering, slept undisturbed through the whole night, and when he awoke in the morning it was observed that every shade of anxiety had disappeared from his brow.

Ordering two of the best axes in the camp to be brought to him, he gave them to his faithful and intrepid comrade Deaf Smith, with directions to conceal them, so as to be able to lay hands on them at a moment's warning, and not to be out of his call the whole day. The morning wore away, and Gen. Cos was seen with 540 men moving over the prairie towards the enemy's camp, but Houston, apprehensive of the effect of such intelligence on his little band, pronounced the affair a mere *ruse* on the part of Santa Anna, and his opinion was publicly sustained by the spy, who had been sent out to ascertain the real state of facts. At this juncture, a council of war consisting of six field officers was called, at their suggestion. The General-in-Chief, seated on the grass beneath a post oak tree, submitted the proposition whether they should attack the enemy in his position, or whether they should wait for him to attack them in theirs? The two juniors in rank were in favor of attack, but the four seniors objected, alleging that such a movement as charging a disciplined army in position by a raw soldiery, advancing in an open prairie, without the cover of artillery, and with only two hundred bayonets, was an unheard-of thing. The council was dismissed. The troops were sounded as to an attack, and were found to be favorable, and the General at once determined, on his own responsibility, to give battle. Deaf Smith and a companion were now summoned to the General's side, and ordered to take the axes, which had been provided, and cut down

Vince's bridge, over which both armies had reached the battle ground. It was now three o'clock in the afternoon, and still the enemy showed no disposition to come to an engagement. Things had taken just such a course, as the General in-Chief expected, and he at once began to prepare for the attack. The first regiment under the command of Gen. Burleson was assigned to the centre, the second regiment under Col. Sherman formed the left wing, while the artillery under Col. Hockley and four companies of infantry under Lieut. Col. Millard occupied the right. The cavalry, 61 in number, led on by Col. Lamar, moved on the extreme right, and in the course of a few minutes the whole army, advancing rapidly in line through the open prairie, were within two hundred yards of the enemy's breast works. The left wing was under the command of Gen. Rusk, who turned the enemy's flank in gallant style, while the centre was led on by the General-in-Chief.

The moment had at last come, the charge was ordered, and the war cry, *Remember the Alamo*, resounded from all sides with a terrific shout, while the two six-pounders opened a well-directed fire of grape and canister. At that instant, Deaf Smith, swinging an axe over his head, rode up and communicated with the General, who immediately dashed along the lines and announced the destruction of Vince's bridge. "Now fight for lives, boys, and remember the Alamo!" exclaimed the General, in a clear distinct voice. The effect of this intelligence was electric, and the whole column of seven hundred Texans, swayed and animated with the strength and fury of ten times seven hundred men, rushed forward, with Houston at their head, right into the teeth of their foe. The Mexicans were drawn up in perfect order, and reserved their fire till the Texans were within sixty yards, but the mass of their storm of lead went over the heads of the assailants.—One ball shattered Houston's ankle, and several struck his horse in the breast, but heeding none of these things, the General spurred his charger on with redoubled speed, closely followed by the whole column at an increased and fearful pace. The Texans reserved their fire till within pistol shot, when every ball told with dreadful effect on the Mexican lines, and before the latter could reload, they were engaged hand to hand with their infuriated foes, who, on their side, not stopping to reload their rifles, broke them over the heads of the invaders, discharged their pistols, and closed the work of slaughter with their huge bowie knives, by absolutely hewing their way through dense masses of living flesh. The right and left wing of the enemy had been routed, but his centre remained firm, and, at one moment, repelling the desperate charge of the Texans, he was preparing with a division of more than five hundred men to fall upon the battalion of Texan infantry, when Houston, seeing the movement, putting himself at the head of his comrades, and calling on them to follow him, gave the order to fire. There seemed to be but one explosion, so instantaneous was the fire, and the enemy's charging force was literally mowed down as with a scythe—only thirty-two out of five hundred remaining in their shoes as prisoners of war. This movement decided

the fate of the day, and the next instant the Mexicans were flying in every direction before their pursuers, who continued to *remember the Alamo*, and executed fearful vengeance on their barbarous foe. The enemy left in his entrenchments, amongst the dead and wounded, nearly half of his eighteen hundred effective men, who went into battle that day and at Vince's bridge and the morass in the rear of his camp, nearly four hundred are supposed to have been slaughtered. Towards the close of the day Houston's horse fell beneath him, pierced by no less than seven balls, and in falling brought his master to the earth on his wounded leg, but calling for another horse, he remounted, rode slowly across the field, and cheered by his comrades. As he moved along he spied two large ravens hovering over the spot where the enemy's artillery had been posted, with their heads towards the west. In a moment several muskets were seized by the men standing near, bringing them down, but Houston ordered them to desist, remarking that the omen was a good one, that it denoted the march of empire westward. Arriving shortly afterwards at the oak under which he had slept the previous night, he received Almonte as prisoner of war from the hands of Gen. Rusk, an exhausted by loss of blood, fainted and fell from his saddle.

Thus ended the bloody battle of San Jacinto, a battle that has no parallel in the annals of human warfare, for the accomplishment of so great a result as that which followed it, with such insignificant means as those which were employed by the single man who led his comrades to victory. Of eighteen hundred men comprising Santa Ana's army, seven only escaped from the field, leaving eighteen hundred as prisoners of war, while all the rest perished. The Texan loss was seven killed and thirty wounded! The next morning a detachment was sent by the victor to bury the enemy's dead, but it returned and announced that decomposition had progressed so rapidly as to render it impossible for them to execute the order. In the mean time the Texans were scouring the country and bringing in prisoners. Houston gave orders to examine closely every man captured, predicting that Santa Ana would be caught, making his retreat. Lieutenant Sylvester of Cincinnati, was riding over the prairie about noon on the day after the battle, when he spied a man running towards Vince's bridge. The man the fugitive saw that he was pursued, he sank down in the grass, but upon Sylvester's coming up where he was, he sprang to his feet and looked his captor full in the face. Sylvester saw at once the skin cap, the round jacket, the trowsers of coarse blue cotton, and the common shoes, were a disguised and being joined by his companions, conveyed the prisoner to camp, who desired to be carried before Gen. Houston. As he passed the Mexican prisoners, their exclamations betrayed his character—was Santa Ana! He was taken at once to Houston, who was lying on the ground endeavoring to compose himself to sleep. He took his victor's hand when the latter, rousing himself, looked up in the face of the Mexican, who announced himself to be the President of Mexico and Houston's prisoner of war. Houston asked the prisoner to be seated

near by, and sent for Almonte to interpret, in the following conversation took place between two Generals, Houston resting on his elbow on the ground:

Santa Ana.—The conqueror of the Napoleon of the West is to no common destiny, and he can afford to be generous to the vanquished.

Houston.—You should have remembered that, sir, at the no!

Santa Ana.—The Alamo was taken by storm, and the uses of war justified the slaughter of the vanquished.

Houston.—Such usages do not now prevail among civilized nations.

Santa Ana.—I was acting under the orders of my Government.

Houston.—You are the Government yourself, sir.

Santa Ana.—I have such orders in my possession.

Houston.—A dictator, sir, has no superior.

Santa Ana.—My orders were to exterminate every man found in Texas, to treat all such as pirates, because they have no Government and are fighting under no recognized flag.

Houston.—I have no doubt you have found out by this time the Texans have both a Government and a flag, but admitting the force of your plea for the San Antonio massacre, you have no excuse for the Fannin slaughter, for he had capitulated on the terms offered by your General, and yet his whole command was murdered without arms in their hands.

Santa Ana.—I knew nothing of their capitulation, but ordered execution upon the representation of Gen. Urrea, that he had conquered them in battle.

Houston.—I know, sir, that the command had capitulated.

Santa Ana.—Then I was ignorant of the fact, and if ever I get Urrea into my hands, I will execute him for his duplicity, for I have no authority to receive their capitulation at all.

Here the conversation ended for a while, and Santa Ana asked for opium, which was given him, and Houston ordered his marquee and luggage to be restored to him, and requested him to give directions to the other divisions of his army to instantly evacuate the country and retire to Monterey, which directions were at once given, and intrusted to Dickie to be delivered. Almonte and Houston then entered into conversation, in which the latter vindicated his policy, to the full satisfaction of the former, postponing the battle to the second day, and in the conversation was interpreted to Santa Ana that he remarked that he now for the first time understood the American character, and that he was incensed Americans could never be conquered.

Houston knew that there was scarcely a man in the army who did not wish to see Santa Ana expiate his crimes upon the scaffold, but he determined that no violence, no indignity should be offered to the captive, and in this resolution he was influenced, by the great principle of charity to the neighbor, and secondly by the dictates of a just public policy. He had great difficulty in preventing his sanguinary, but his superior knowledge of what was in man, enabled him to counteract the feelings of vengeance, that were too deeply indulged in by the army, and when the hour and the occasion passed when men saw how much and how unworthily they had been under the influence of their passions, Houston had saved them from themselves, it was universally acknowledged that no man but Houston could have prevented the murder of Santa Ana.

On the first night after his capture he slept in his marquee, with every comfort of camp life, while the General lay on the cold ground near by, suffering incalculable pain from his wound. The next day, Santa Ana, elegantly clad in the garb of a civilian, found Houston prostrate with his wound on the earth, dressed in an old black coat, a pair of

snuff-colored pantaloons, a black velvet vest, a fur cap, and a worn out pair of boots, with a huge sword attached to his side by buckskin thongs. To the proposition of the former for his liberty, Houston replied that he had no power in the premises, that the question would be referred by him to the Government of Texas, intelligence that was exceedingly distasteful to the Mexican.

Meantime, the other divisions of the invading army commenced their retreat from Texas to the west side of the Rio Grande, under the express orders of their captive president, which had been forwarded to them by Houston. When the news of the victory reached the ears of the fugitive *ad interim* Government of Texas, its members slowly repaired to the headquarters of the General-in-chief. Houston's advice to the Government was, to treat with Santa Ana only on the following terms: 1. The recognition of the independence of Texas by Mexico. 2. The western limit of Texas to be the Rio Grande to its source. 3. Indemnity for all losses sustained by Texas during the war. 4. All Texan prisoners to be restored to liberty. 5. Instantaneous withdrawal of all Mexican troops from Texas, and the restoration of all property to its owners. 6. The retention of Santa Ana as a hostage, till these provisions of the treaty were executed. Volunteers now began to rush in from all quarters, and Houston being rendered helpless by his wound, General Rusk, at his instance, was appointed by the Government to succeed him in the command of the army, that now required the most rigid discipline and order to be maintained to make it effective. Santa Ana, from the time he was delivered over to the Government, experienced a great change in his treatment, and was subjected to the most irritating and humiliating surveillance. The hostility of Houston's home enemies, that first manifested itself in the conduct of the military council, in the affairs of Fannin and Grant, though silenced for the time-being by the presence of the common foe, now broke out afresh, and as the *ad interim* president and many of the civil officials were of this party, the hero, who, by his valor and wisdom had saved the country, was subjected to even more harsh treatment than the captive President of Mexico, from whose first approach they had fled in terror. Instead of treating him with all the consideration that his eminent services merited, these ungrateful and timid men, who chanced to be in authority, absolutely determined to leave the victor upon the field of San Jacinto to die, and refused him, to his face, a passage on the steamboat that was to carry them and Santa Ana to Galveston. But the captain of the vessel vowed that he would never leave the shore without Houston, and, taking his crew, went and brought the wounded soldier on board. The Surgeon-General was discharged from the service by Col. Lamar, the new Secretary of War, for accompanying the wounded chief to Galveston, and the General was refused, by the Government, a passage in the Texan ship-of-war Republic, then about to sail for New Orleans. These petty annoyances ruffled not his temper, though it excited the indignation of the people and the army, but he exhorted them not to be carried away by any feeling

for him—to do their duty to their country. His address to the army, on parting with them for a season, is full of the gratitude and affection, which a brave man only can feel for the brave, and teaches that subordination and discipline are the only roads to military invincibility. Embarking with his staff on board the little American schooner Flora, he reached New Orleans, after a long and tedious passage, in a dying state, as was supposed. He carried with him the first confirmation of the news of the great battle. He was landed amid the greatest excitement and rejoicing, and after a two week's sojourn at the house of his friend Col. William Christy, he so far recovered as to set out on his journey for Texas again, but this time by the way of the Red river. Arrived at San Augustine, he heard that the Government had made a treaty with Santa Ana on the basis of his (Houston's) recommendations, and was resolved on his liberation, but there was also intelligence that the enemy was preparing for another invasion, whereupon he addressed the people with such effect that 160 men took up arms and set out for the frontier. Meantime news was received that the army had demanded of the Government the surrender, trial, sentence, and execution of Santa Ana, upon which the Hero immediately addressed a remonstrance to the army against the consummation of such an act, as violating the principles of humanity and the terms of the treaty, as contrary to the true policy of Texas, and as utterly destructive of the national character of the new Republic. This protest saved Texas from the ignominy and execration which such an act would have surely brought upon her fair fame and name, and Houston removed to Nacogdoches, where he nursed his wound till the following autumn.

After the adoption of the treaty of the 14th of May with Santa Ana, after he was on board the Texas war schooner Invincible, bound for Vera Cruz, and after he had issued his farewell address to the Texan army, in which he gave them all credit for their courage and generosity, and promised them they would never have cause to regret their kindness, Mr. Thomas J. Green, who had just landed at Velasco with about 100 volunteers, determined that Santa Ana should be tried and executed. The popular feeling was on his side, Lamar had issued his protest against the Mexican's release, and the President *ad interim* yielded to this outrageous violation of the public faith, formally pledged in the treaty of the 14th of May, and ordered the captive on shore, but the latter refusing, Green went on board the vessel, and by the exhibition of brute force, compelled him to yield, after a protest against the act, which absolved him from all legal obligations imposed upon him by the treaty. How different would have been the result, had Houston been at Velasco, may be inferred from his known regard for law and the public faith, for when intelligence of this act reached him, he promptly remarked, that had he been the President, he would have upheld the faith of the nation, at all hazards, and before the mob should have laid hands on Santa Ana, they would have had to pass over his dead body. About this time, Col. Lamar was appointed General-in-Chief of the army, over the heads of Houston and

Rusk, but on repairing to head quarters, not one eighteen out of 1,800 troops in the camp, would consent to serve under him—the rest positively refusing.

The administration *ad interim*, feeling that they had not the confidence of the people, and sway by no other motive than hatred of Houston and wish to crush him, which they became convinced was impossible to do, gladly gave way to the election of a President by the people, which had been prodded for, under the new constitution. Houston pressed on all sides to consent to take the office, and seeing, that the time had come for him to save the new Republic, a second time, but this time from its internal foes, he assented, and was elevated to the Presidency, almost by acclamation. An election, at the same time, took place for Senators and Representatives, and on the 3d of October, 1836, the first Congress of the Republic of Texas assembled at Columbia, and the new President was inaugurated on the 22d of the same month. A brief, masterly inaugural address, breathing the wisdom and counsel in every line of it, and the laying of the sword upon the civil altar, constituted the principal ceremonies. The selection of his heads of departments was guided by the most magnanimous policy, and the people, for the first time in their existence as a nation, felt that their government would be ministered with purity, honesty, firmness and wisdom. [Santa Ana, during these events, had been saved from the fury of his insensate enemies, was detained as a captive, under a guard of 20 men, about twelve miles from the Seat of Government, whither Houston repaired, determined to wipe the stain of dishonor from the name of Texas, which the conduct of the late administration sullied it. Gen. Jackson, to whom Santa Ana had written, after the violation by Texas of the treaty of May 14th, replied to him in terms of the highest praise of Houston's treatment of him, after the battle, and considered it as even of greater value than the victory itself, for said the Old Hero: "Let not who clamor for blood, clamor on, the world will take care of Houston's fame." After a brief conference with the Senate, which was for detaining the prisoner, Houston determined to release the captive, once, on his own responsibility, and on the 25th of November, Santa Ana, attended by Colonels Iley and Bee, and Major Patton, set out for the Seat of Government of the United States, by the route of the Sabine.

President Houston now despatched William Wharton and Memucan Hunt, as Ministers to Washington, with instructions to commence negotiations for annexing Texas to the United States, but it was the temper of the public mind upon this occasion, at that time, in this country, that nothing was effected beyond sowing the seed of so natural a wise a policy, though through the agency of P. of South Carolina, and Walker of Mississippi, other distinguished Senators, the independence of Texas was acknowledged by this Government, the last time Gen. Jackson ever put his pen on paper, was to sign the resolution of Congress to that effect. Houston's policy, from the beginning, was annexation to the United States, but his offer had been rejected by our Government,

ained to conduct his administration on principles which would secure confidence at home and inspire respect abroad, to lay the foundations of the Republic and strong, to husband its resources, never to pile the State with a public debt, and to be the friend of the whole people, and not of a faction. It was his cultivation of friendly relations with the Comanches and other Indian tribes on the frontier of Texas, that he saved the Republic from their invasions, and made them to love and venerate his name. As yet, the Government had no money in treasury, except its own paper, had no credit to draw on any, and still there was an army in the field of 400 men, which had to be supported. A crisis, more dangerous than any that had arisen, hitherto assailed the country—it was threatened with collision between the army and the civil authority. The general of the army had projected an expedition against Matamoras, and to his standard flocked all who were discontented with the President, while the general in command of the army threatened to march on Houston and overturn the government. The President saw the evil that had come upon the country, forthwith quietly despatched the Secretary of War to the camp, with sealed orders, to be opened on his arrival. The orders instructed the Secretary to furlough the whole army, by companies, till it was reduced to six hundred men, and to march them to certain points on the sea-coast. The furloughs were unlimited, but they were liable to be terminated at any time, by proclamation, and those furloughed, did not report themselves in ten days after the proclamation, they were to be considered and treated as deserters. He could not break up the army outright, for he had nothing to pay them off with, and the danger of such an exercise of power had been too manifest in the attempt of Washington to disband the army of the North, for Houston fell into the same error, and yet so completely had all subordination been broken down, so great were the scenes of violence committed by the separate and lawless bands of the camp, that he determined to get rid of the evil. When the various companies reached their destination, they made the best of their way to the United States, fearing they would not get out of the country before the proclamation was issued, and the result obtained was the very reverse and aim of the President, in this admirably conceived and well executed stroke of policy. Never was the issue known, than the country felt it had been saved from the greatest danger that yet assailed it.

The early Congresses of Texas seemed not to feel they had a country to legislate for, but rather that, as though their mission was to enrich their members by plundering the people. During Houston's two terms of office, he acted always on his own responsibility, holding but few cabinet councils, and introduced no less than sixty-five bills, thus preventing the country from being absolutely ruined. The land law of Texas, vetoed by him, but adopted over his head, opened the door to all sorts of fraud, and is to this day, a fruitful source of litigation about titles. He vetoed a paper money bill, but the bill was passed under his successor's administration, and the ruinous result, predicted by Houston,

was fully realized. At the close of his first administration, he left the Government perfectly organized with officers of ability, integrity, and economy, in every branch of the public service—Texas was at peace with the Indian tribes, and had a growing commerce with her enemy over the Rio Grande—the nation owed a million and a half of dollars, and its paper money, of which \$600,000 were out, was at par—the proposition of annexation to the United States had been withdrawn—the frontier counties were filling up, and the tide of immigration was setting in from abroad—justice was begun to be administered with even hand, where before confusion and mob-law prevailed—and the arts of peace and industry were every where taking the place of military indolence and the hunter's unproductive life. Had the constitution permitted, he would have been re-elected by acclamation, but the country was to lose his services to learn their value, and the sudden death of the excellent gentleman who was the administration candidate, just before the election, gave the presidency to Gen. Lamar, who was the head of the opposition.

The incoming dynasty attempted to prevent Houston from delivering a valedictory address, but when the assembled masses became aware of this insult to the hero of San Jacinto, they unceremoniously set aside the ceremonies of the inauguration of the new president, and listened for three hours to the old president's speech, which swayed to and fro the dense thousands, as the strong wind sweeps over the forest. President Lamar's administration was diametrically opposite to that of President Houston's, in every important particular. The extermination of the Indians, deadly hostility to annexation, a national bank, a splendid government, removal of the capital to Austin, and the erection of expensive national buildings, an expedition to reduce Santa Fe and the whole northwest country, extensive issues of government paper money, negotiations with Arista to unite the northern Departments of Mexico with Texas, a great national road, negotiations with Mexico for peace, alliance with Mexico by the marriage of the President with the daughter of Gomez Farias, one of the public functionaries of that country, violation of the treaty of Texas with the Cherokees, and a sanguinary war against them, increase of the army and navy, negotiations for a union with Yucatan, quadrupling the national debt by extravagant and useless expenditures, breaking down the postal system of the country, profligacy in high places—such were some of the doctrines and measures of this unfortunate administration, unfortunate to the actors in it, and doubly so to the country. Things had even been worse if Houston had not been in Congress during those two years of misrule, for on one occasion he absolutely prevented a dissolution of the Government, and thus saved the country a third time by his timely counsel and burning appeal to the members of Congress, which was on the eve of adjourning *sine die*, utterly despairing of its ability to legislate for the nation, and to carry on the Government in the midst of the corruption and ruin that prevailed on every side. The three years of misrule and maladministration drew to a close, and the people, with

almost one acclaim, summoned Houston to the presidency a second time, and he came to the rescue once more.

He was inaugurated on the 13th of December, 1841, and the first greeting he had in office was the news of the fatal Santa Fe expedition, but he immediately set to work to redeem the unfortunate victims of his predecessor's policy. Under his recommendation, Congress suspended the payment of the old debt, and that had been increased from one and a half millions to twelve millions, authorized the issue of \$200,000 in paper, the redemption of which was guaranteed by the hypothecation of the revenue from customs, and by the help of this new system of currency, he was enabled to revive, in some measure, the ability of the Government to discharge its daily obligations. Calling to his assistance gentlemen of acknowledged ability and purity of purpose, on whom he could rely, he marked out his policy, and went calmly and firmly to its execution, regardless of the opposition, which was composed of the elements of the late administration. He re-opened negotiations at Washington for annexation, determined, if he failed again in this application, to seek the recognition of Texan Independence by Mexico, and failing in that, to enter into some treaty or alliance with France or England, which would secure the peace of Texas, extend her commerce, and permit her to move forward on the high road to prosperity. His next movement was to recall the navy, which had been sent to aid a revolt in Yucatan. In the exposed situation of the country, when an irruption of Indians or an invasion of Mexicans, which had been provoked by the policy of the late administration, was reasonably apprehended, Houston asked Congress for subsidies, but it adjourned without granting them, and shortly after Vasquez crossed the Rio Grande with a Mexican force. The utmost alarm prevailed, the opposition to the President suddenly ceased, and the country looked for another invasion, while the President, not believing that the invaders would make any progress then—they soon retreated—appealed to the American people for aid, in a future emergency, and sent agents to this country to procure volunteers and receive contributions, but as Texas had no money in her treasury, he required that no volunteers would be received unless perfectly armed and provisioned for a campaign of six months. This appeal brought men enough without arms or provisions, but no money, and the President called Congress together to devise means for the national defence, whereupon they met, voted him ten millions of acres of the public domain to carry on the campaign with, and invested him with dictatorial powers—the last man in the world to offer such authority to. He vetoed this extraordinary bill, in the midst of a storm of opposition to him, more violent than any that had hitherto assailed his devoted head, but when he demonstrated that the bill was utterly insufficient to provide the means for a campaign against Mexico, and frankly told the country that he never would accept dictatorial powers to fight against the same powers in a neighboring State, the storm against him blew over, and the people glorified him more than ever. An open rebellion against the laws of the country had, in the meantime, been put

down, economy had been restored to the administration of affairs, and the public credit began to feel the effect of restored confidence, and Houston's wise measures of policy. The Santa Fe prisoners were liberated, in consequence of the earnest and untiring negotiations of the President, and a powerful and successful appeal was addressed to the great Christian Powers of the earth which had acknowledged the independence of Texas, to interpose with Mexico and induce her to put an end to her harrassing pillage; and robbery of the western borders of the new republic.

In the latter movement, which attracted more attention in Europe than any other act of the kind in the annals of diplomacy, the United States took no active part. This appeal was considered in Europe one of the ablest state papers that was ever written, and it opened the eyes of England and France to the importance and necessity of cultivating political and commercial relations with a people whose country and policy were animated by such principles as those contained in this remarkable despatch. England was ever on the alert for the promotion of her own interests, interposed, and an armistice between Texas and her unforgiving enemy was extorted from Santa Anna, by Houston's successfully turning the diplomatic artillery of the Mexican against himself. The consummation decided President Houston to take further action in relation to annexation, but to defer the issue of events. His policy was what every sound statesman must approve, and that was to maintain with France and England the most friendly relations, and in the event the United States would not consent to annexation, which was his favorite policy, to fall back upon a treaty, offensive and defensive, against Mexico, with either England or France, as a powerful ally, and so advance rapidly to power. In all his despatches to his minister at Washington, this policy was steadily adhered to, in all his negotiations he acted with the most perfect honor and fairness with the three great powers. England gave her mediation with Mexico unconditionally. In the mean time, President Tyler, seeing the danger which threatened the Texas question, the course which England had taken, wisely determined on negotiating a treaty of annexation, but it was lost in the Senate by the party conflicts in which he was unfortunately involved. In a private interview with our minister near the Texan Government, President Houston addressed himself to the Texas question with the eye of a prophet, and he foretold what has since, in a great measure, taken place. His second term came to an end, and annexation, his favorite policy, had not been accomplished, but enough had been done to render it certain to his mind that the United States would do what was to be done, without prompting, and as his administration was continued in the person of his confidant, his Secretary of State, his policy was still followed, his views still consulted, his voice still heard, so that there could be no failure of final agreement, so far as Texas herself was concerned. His office under brilliant auspices, for there was peace with all the Indian tribes, the navy was laid up, emigration was pouring in, Mexico had sheathed her sword at the time, and annexation was near its consummation.

The new Republic, soon afterwards, became one of the States of this Union, and the Hero of San Jacinto was called to represent her in the United States Senate. His course in the Senate has been marked by all that soundness of judgment and devotion to his country, for which he has ever been distinguished. When Mexico invaded the State of Texas, his counsels were the same as those when he invaded the territory of Texas, to exterminate the handful of colonists who had dared to assert their rights—they were for war. When the question came up in Congress, for disposing of the territories acquired by the war, from the ancient enemy of Texas, he was found, at the head of the sound counsels that afterwards prevailed, for, when everything was in confusion, he suggested, on the 8th of February, 1850, the principles of the measures that were afterwards adopted, and contributed more perhaps than any other man in Congress to the existing settlement of the subject. His speeches on this question abound in that practical wisdom which has ever characterized his public acts, and to no man more than to him, did the people look with more confidence for a solution of the difficulties which our new territories brought with them, for every re-ecting man knew that Texas alone could untie the Gordian knot, and that as Sam Houston and his colleague went, so would their constituents go.

Houston's character may be summed up in a few words.

He is an honest, brave, and humane man, with a clear head, a well-balanced mind, and a soul that loves the truth for its own sake. As a military man, he ranks equally with the greatest captains of any age, if results be the measure of qualification, and there can be no better standard of judging correctly on any subject. If compared with the two soldiers, who led our arms to victory in Mexico, he carries away the palm of supremacy, for neither of them ever fought a battle of San Jacinto, and Houston did; neither of them, though at the head of the armies of the United States, ever captured Santa

Ana, and Houston did. For powers of civil administration, he has proved himself to be fully equal to any civilian who has ever lived, for no civilian, in either ancient or modern times, ever had a Government like that of Texas to create, and administer, and recreate, after its practical dissolution by his enemies, and Houston had. As a law-giver, the history of Texan and American legislation attests to his clear perception of the wants and necessities of men. Justice, mercy, and charity have ever balanced his public acts, and hence the unbounded admiration of the people for him. No respecter of persons, the poor, the helpless, the widow, the orphan, the working-man, and above all, woman, have ever found in him a friend in need, and a vindicator of their rights. He illustrates his democracy by his mode of life, for he lives in a log cabin, the latch string of whose door is not only not pulled in, but whose hospitable door itself is always wide open to invite the wayfarer in. His hands have never been tainted with corruption, and his private interests have never been permitted by him to come in conflict with his public duties. He has never used his official station to promote his private welfare, or suffered it to be used by others for his personal benefit. During his long and brilliant career as a public servant, he has ever guarded the immense sums of the public treasure, over which he has had control, with dragon-like care, and his accounts of his stewardship in this respect, have established for him the character of a just, and honest, and a faithful man. He is a man of his word, never promises what he cannot do, and never omits or neglects to do what he promises. Such a man is reserved, as Santa Ana well predicted, for no ordinary destiny, and as he has executed, with honor to himself and glory to his country, all the highest offices of trust, which the people of two nations had to bestow, *but one*, it will be for the American people to fill up the measure of justice and gratitude to a faithful public servant, by making him

PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES.

